Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Latin Suffixes

• **SUFFIX**: “one or more letters added to the end of a word to modify its meaning, and also often change its part of speech”
  – a very important and common feature of Latinate vocabulary in English
  – about twice as many suffixes as prefixes
  – also, suffixes alter the grammar of a word/BASE, not just modify its meaning
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Latin Suffixes

• THREE major types of suffixes (in order of frequency):
  – adjective-forming: HUGE group, 6 lessons in Ayers
    • n.b. abbreviations: p.t. (“pertaining to”), t.t. (“tending to”)
  – noun-forming: another 6 lessons in Ayers (including diminutives)
  – verb-forming: only 3 lessons because most BASES are verbs to begin with and don’t need a special suffix to be changed into verbs
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Latin Suffixes

- see list of suffixes in Ayers, pp. 149-50
  - listed alphabetically
- see also the handout on Latin affixes on the web site (suffixes, pp. 3-5): organized by meaning
  http://www.usu.edu/markdamen/Wordpower/handouts/lataffix.pdf
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Latin Suffixes

• **SUBSTANTIVE**: “an adjective which functions as a noun, without changing the form of the word,” e.g. a deductible
  – the good, the bad and the ugly
  – a heavy, a stiff, a moderate
  – the Aggies, Big Blue, the Longhorns, the Trojans
  – trojans, rubbers, prophylactics
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Latin Suffixes

• substantives are very common with certain Latin suffixes
  – -ian (Lesson 8): barbarian, Virginian, Christian, amphibian, antiquarian
    • some are felt to be nouns almost exclusively, e.g. historian, librarian
    • cf. the related suffix -ane: butane, methane, propane
  – -ary (Lesson 9): dictionary, granary, commentary, aviary

• “substantive” = answer for part of speech
  – noun, verb, adjective, substantive
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Word Analysis

• now that we have prefixes/BASES/suffixes, it’s possible to analyze words fully

• please use the proper format:

  con- with
  DUCT- lead
  -or one who

• note that there can be more than one affix of either kind
  – e.g., ir-/re-/con-/CIL-/abil/-ity
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Word Analysis

• determining a word’s actual meaning from its components often involves the difficulty of seeing an underlying metaphor
  – you’ll need to practice seeing how to divine the metaphor behind a word’s etymological meaning
  – the best way to accomplish that is by doing your homework regularly and thoroughly
  – some words will be very difficult to interpret
    • e.g. precarious: “full of (needing) prayer”
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Word Analysis

• TWO promises I will make you:
  – You will be able to figure out the meaning of the words I choose to put on tests and quizzes without having a Ph.D. in linguistics or being Shakespeare!
  – The harder you work, the faster figuring out metaphors will come to you—and the more words you’ll learn!

“Dissect the bat, study it carefully, and on this model construct the machine.”